



NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

**3 SMART
TOYS**



KIDS

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**20
Cute
Animals**



**ALVIN AND THE
CHIPMUNKS**

3

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Cheetahs,
Pandas
and More!**

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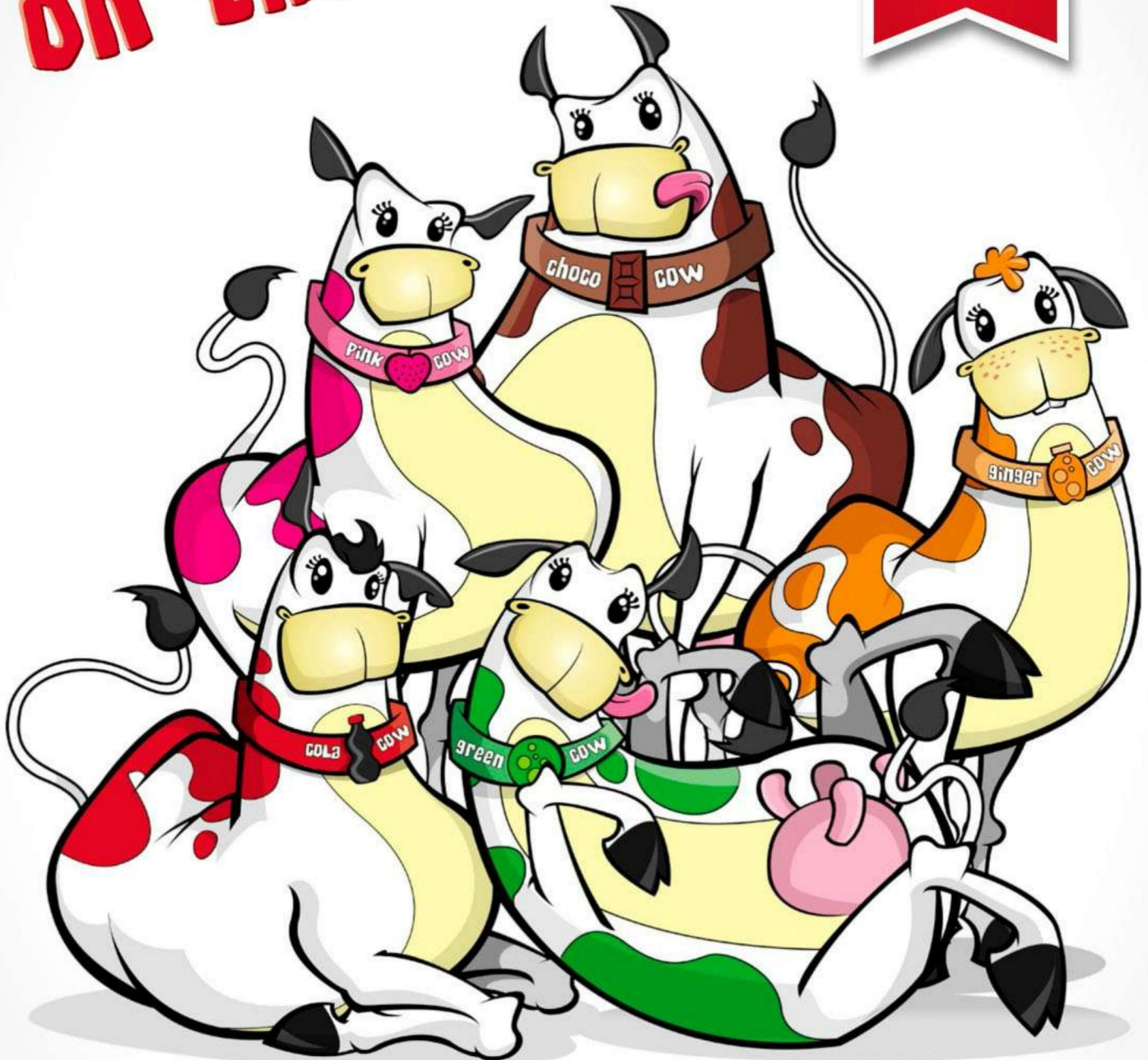
**Animal Holidays,
Wacky Hotels and
15 Cool Things to Do!**

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC



Issue 88 December 2011 R25,95 (VAT incl.)

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- Send us an e-mail to fiona@ngkids.co.za or SMS* us a letter to "NGK Letters" 33970.

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EMIL: IT WILL BE GOOD TO SPEND TIME PLAYING WITH MY DOGS BANDIT AND BENTLEY.

JANI: I'LL BE TRAVELLING UP AND DOWN SOUTH AFRICA.

SHOUNEES: I'LL BE HAVING FUN WITH FRIENDS.

LISEL: I'LL BE EXPLORING NATURE.

FIONA: I'LL BE VISITING MY SISTER AND FAMILY WHO LIVE IN THE ALPS IN FRANCE. IT'S BEEN THREE YEARS SINCE I'VE SEEN MY LITTLE NEPHEW!

DELENÉ: IT WILL BE MY SON'S FIRST CHRISTMAS.

In this issue we look forward to the holidays. When you get your copy you'll probably still have to finish the last of school. Squeeze in a last bit of effort before heading off on your summer break.

Looking back over 2011 it's been quite a year! We've had bad floods in South Africa in January; the Japanese tsunami in March 2011 shocked the world; the royal wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge broke a Guinness World Record for the most online live views for a single event; the seven billionth person was born and we had four strange dates: 1/1/11, 1/11/11, 11/1/11 and 11/11/11.

With holidays on our mind, we have some suggestions for cool places to stay, wacky hotels, some haunted holiday haunts as well as 15 things to do this holiday.

Here is what some of the NG KIDS staff will be doing over the holidays.

Dare to Explore!

LETTER OF THE MONTH

DEAR FIONA

IT IS MY FIRST TIME WRITING TO YOU, SO I WANT TO SAY THANK YOU FOR WRITING ALL THE COOL STUFF IN THE MAGAZINE.

I HAVE ONE PET FISH! I HOPE TO BE IN THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS MAGAZINE ONE DAY!

JAMEEL MOLLAGEE, 11, JOHANNESBURG

SUBSCRIBERS OF THE MONTH

December's subscribers of the month are Jeanri Olwage (10) and Gillan Olwage (7) from Somerset West. They've won a Nature Discovery "Hiking on Wheels" experience through the mountains and trails of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve for a family of four, valued at R1 580.

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REPRODUCTION Media24
PRINTING Paarl Media Cape
DISTRIBUTION: 

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS is published and distributed twelve times a year by Media24, with permission of the National Geographic Society, Washington, DC 20036.

Published by the National Geographic Society.
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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC



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Discover the secrets of the Zambezi shark.

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Animals take a break, too. NG KIDS follow them on their holidays.

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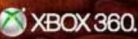
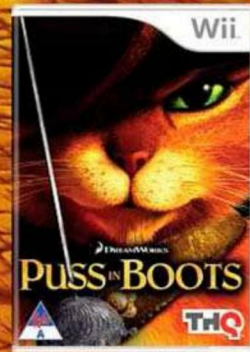
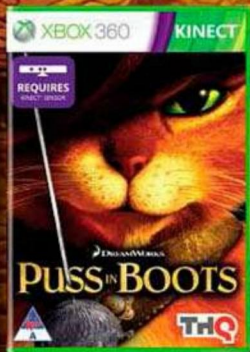
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COVER PHOTOGRAPH: JURGEN & CHRISTINE SOHNS / PHOTOLIBRARY (DOLPHIN)
COVER INSETS: ISTOCKPHOTO (ILLUSTRATION); COURTESY TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX (CHIPMUNKS); COURTESY OF MATTEL (FUJIT TOY)
PAGE 4: SA NG KIDS STAFF (SA NG KIDS STAFF)
PAGE 5: © JAN VERMEER / FOTO NATURA (HARP SEAL); PETE ATKINSON / GETTY (SHARK); ISTOCKPHOTO (ANIMAL HOLIDAYS);
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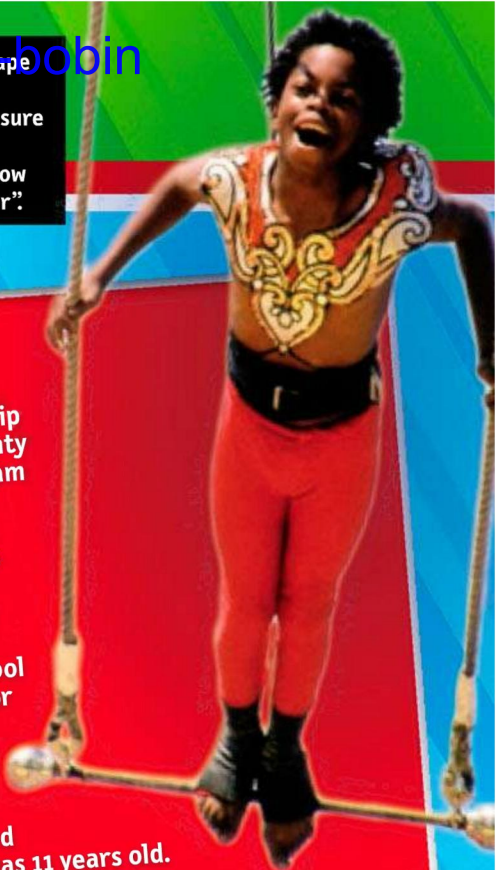
{inside} SCOOP

If you are in Cape Town over the holidays make sure you get to see their latest show "The Caretaker".

Circus Dream

Brent van Rensburg is the co-founder of the Zip Zap circus. Almost twenty years ago he had a dream of starting a circus school for any kid who wanted to learn circus skills. Starting with a trapeze hanging from a tree it wasn't long before the circus school was making a name for itself, performing for presidents and world leaders.

Kagisho Arnold Mutlane (right) joined the circus when he was 11 years old. "I used to be this shy little boy from Khayelitsha. I knew nothing about the circus but used to watch it on TV. One day a friend invited me to watch a circus show at the Waterfront in Cape Town and that's where I saw Zip Zap perform for the first time. I was amazed to see young people enjoying themselves performing with big smiles on their faces."



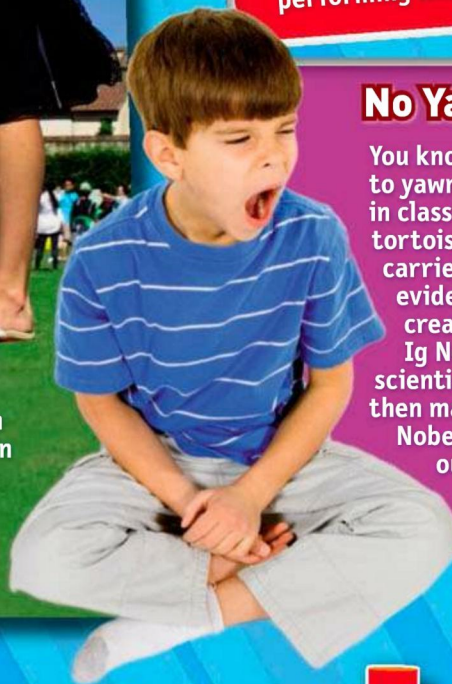
On this Day in History

Ten years ago on 15 December 2001 the Leaning Tower of Pisa reopened to the public. It had been closed for a decade to straighten it up as it was in danger of toppling over. The town of Pisa didn't want their tower to be completely straight as it is famous for its lean. According to engineers the leaning tower will lean safely for another 200 years.



No Yawning Matter

You know how it's almost impossible not to yawn when you see your friend yawning in class? Well it turns out that red-footed tortoises don't have that problem. Scientists carried out a study and found there is "no evidence of contagious yawning" in the creatures. This research won the team an Ig Nobel prize earlier this year. To win, scientists must "first make people laugh, and then make them think," according to the Ig Nobel committee. The prizes are handed out by people who have won real Nobel prizes. So scientists have a sense of humour too!



1st

World Aids Day

10th

End of the School Year

16th

Day of Reconciliation

25th

Christmas Day

FOR YOUR DIARY

26th

Day of Goodwill



Tornado Alert!

Residents of the East Rand were hit by two tornadoes in October. All of South Africa was shocked as news spread of the devastation. It's a myth that tornadoes don't occur here. Most of them occur in unpopulated areas and nobody reports them.

Tornadoes are formed from a supercell thunderstorm which is a long-lasting, severe and rotating thunderstorm. Only a small number of these develop into tornadoes but when they do they come with

lumps of hail. It's dangerous and it's hard to predict exactly when they will hit. People living in summer thunderstorm areas should have "a tornado plan".

TORNADO PLAN:

Indoors: Get to a room away from the wind. Protect your head. You can lie in a bath with a mattress over you.
Outdoors: Find a ditch to lie flat in and protect your head.



Kids Call for Climate Action

Ninety kids from five African Nations met in Durban in October for the 2011 SPAR African Children's Environmental Conference on climate change. This was just before the 17th United Nations Climate Change conference in Durban. "We want to ensure that our children's voices, their actions and requests are heard at the COP17 conference," said conference co-ordinator, Troy Govender.

Kids at the conference, signing a document for COP 17.

Cool Festivals this December

1. Kwanzaa is a week long celebration held in the United States honouring African-American heritage and culture. It is held between 26 December and 1 January every year.
2. Christmas Day celebrates the birth of Jesus. Christmas trees are decorated and gifts are given. In most countries it is on 25 December but in a few it happens on a different date. For example, Christmas is celebrated in Ethiopia on 7 January.
3. Hannukah is a Jewish festival celebrated over eight nights. Candles on a hanukkiyah are lit every night and gifts are given. In 2011 it starts on 20 December.
4. The Emperor's birthday is celebrated in Japan on 23 December. This is the actual birthday of Emperor Akihito who appears on a balcony of the Imperial Palace for crowds to wave at him.
5. Hogmanay is the Scottish celebration of the New Year. At midnight people sing Auld Lang Syne.

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ROLLERKIDZ
www.rollerkidz.co.za

*SMSs cost R1. Free SMSs don't apply. Competition closes 15 November 2011.

Bet you
**didn't
know**

8 surprising facts about **spiders**

1 **Golden silk**
orb-weaver spiders
vibrate their webs
to **distract predators.**

3 After a large meal,
a tarantula
may not **eat**
for a **month.**

5 There are more than
37 000 species
of **spiders.**

7 The
oldest known
spider fossils
are more than
300 million
years old.

2 **Black widow spiders**
are more **venomous**
than **rattlesnakes.**

4 Crab spiders
change
colour to
blend in with
their surroundings.

6
A spider **eats**
about **2 000**
insects a year.

8 450 grams of
spider silk
could stretch
around the equator.

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3 Smart Toys

The Science Behind This Season's Coolest Toys

BY KRISTIN BAIRD RATTINI



2

It's easy to see that this season's hottest toys are supersmart. With the help of things such as voice recognition and infrared lights, they create cutting-edge fun. But these tech-savvy toys also put *you* in the spotlight. They're all about active participation. Check out these three toys and the science that makes them so clever.

1

THE TOY

Loopz M3

WHAT IT IS

A hand-held electronic light game

COOL SCIENCE

Motion detection

HOW IT WORKS

This game will set your fingers flying. Four lights flash in a pattern which you try to repeat by moving your fingers over the correct lights. Each light has a motion sensor that sends out an invisible beam. When one finger is over a sensor, it reflects the beam back so the sensor can keep track of your moves. It's the same way a cat running across your driveway might trigger a motion detector which turns on a floodlight. Keep those fingers flexed: after mastering one sequence, you'll get a harder pattern.



THE TOY

Air Swimmers

WHAT IT IS

A remote-controlled, helium-filled shark or clown fish that "swims" through the air

COOL SCIENCE

Infrared light

HOW IT WORKS

Helium makes the toy float, but *you* control the swish of the fish. Push a button on the remote to send invisible infrared light beams to a sensor on the fish's belly. A different light pattern flashes for each direction (up, down, left, or right), just as your TV remote does when you use it to change channels and volume. The sensor's microchip – the toy's computerised "brain" – reads the pattern and tells the toy's motor how to glide and dive through the air. Now all you need is some floating fish food.

THE TOY

Fijit Friends

WHAT IT IS

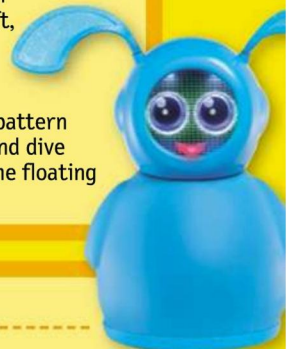
Robot that responds when you speak to it

COOL SCIENCE

Voice recognition

HOW IT WORKS

How does a Fijit Friend know to giggle when you tell a joke? Think of every sound you make as a piece of a jigsaw puzzle. The Fijit Friend takes all the puzzle pieces and fits them together into words and sentences. It then tries to match these words and phrases to the ones stored in its microchip using a process called voice recognition. If your 'bot finds a match for something you say, it gives a pre-programmed response. This toy is definitely going to create a lot of chatter!



3



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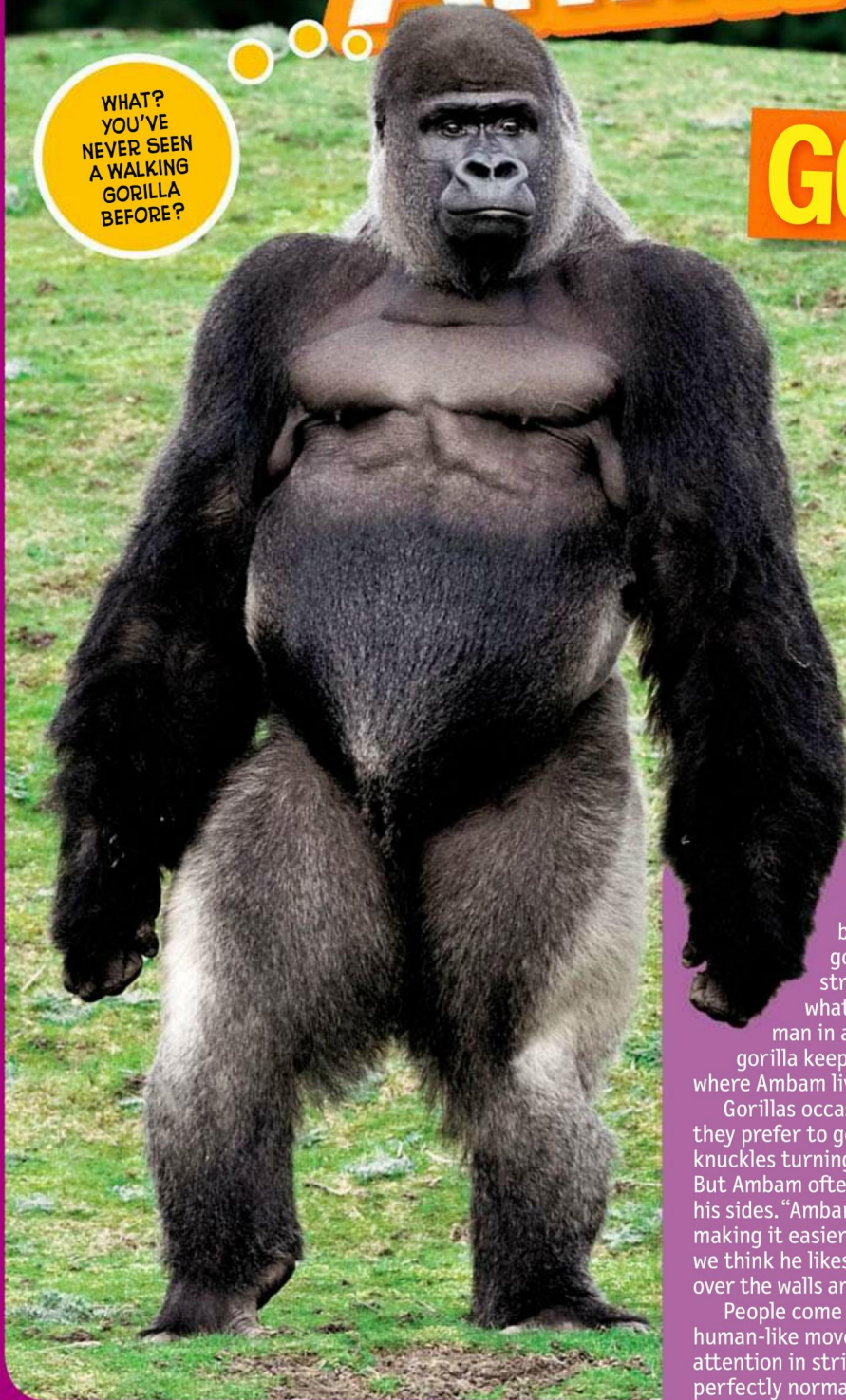
pokemon.com

The Pokémon Company
INTERNATIONAL

Amazing Animals

WHAT?
YOU'VE
NEVER SEEN
A WALKING
GORILLA
BEFORE?

GORILLA WALKS LIKE A DUDE



Kent, England

Apes rarely are mistaken for humans, but when Ambam the western lowland gorilla stands upright and starts strolling around on his feet, that's exactly what happens. "Some visitors think he's a man in a gorilla suit," says Phil Ridges, head gorilla keeper at Port Lympne Wild Animal Park, where Ambam lives.

Gorillas occasionally *do* walk on their hind legs, but they prefer to get around on all fours, their padded knuckles turning their hands into an extra pair of feet. But Ambam often walks upright, his arms swinging by his sides. "Ambam is more flexible than other gorillas, making it easier for him to stand," Phil says. "And we think he likes walking on two feet so he can see over the walls and watch for his keepers bringing food."

People come from all over to see Ambam's human-like moves. But the gorilla is taking the attention in stride. "For Ambam, walking this way is perfectly normal," Phil says. "He has no idea what the fuss is all about." — C.M. Tomlin

© DAVE ROLFE (AMBAM); COURTESY JEAN CHU, D.D.S. (DUSTY); STEWART BEAN / NGS STAFF (CUFFS); KELLEY MILLER / NGS STAFF (MAGIC, BOTH)

I WANT
TO SPEAK
TO MY
LAWYER.

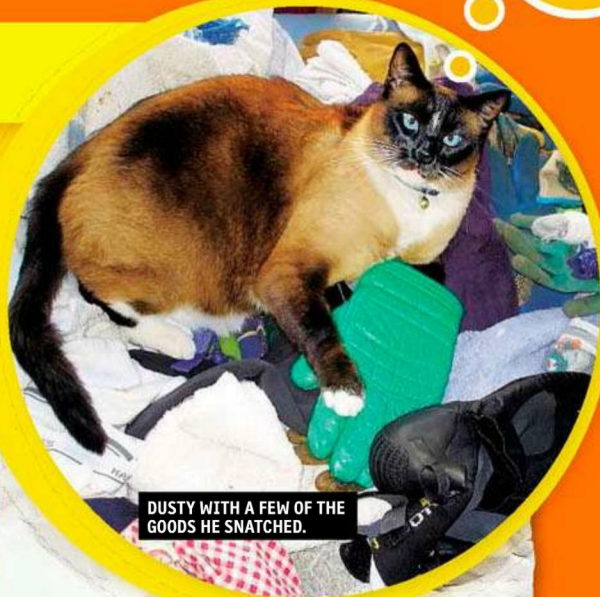
KITTY CRIME SPREE

San Mateo, California

A sly thief sneaks through a neighbourhood looking for loot. When he sees something he likes, he steals it and drags it away—with his teeth. The tricky four-footed suspect? Dusty the cat.

This furry offender has carried home more than 600 items over the past four years. He leaves his spoils on his front lawn or slips them one at a time through the dog door. Dusty once raked in 11 objects in a single night. He gets his goods from neighbours' gardens, nabbing everything from socks and stuffed animals to gloves and goggles.

According to cat behaviour expert Marilyn Krieger, Dusty's just being himself. "Some cats like collecting things," she says. "They're natural hunters and searching for objects to bring to their families is a type of hunting behaviour." The cat's most fashionable find? A pink sequined purse he brought home, just in time for Valentine's Day. — *Kitson Jazyuka*



DUSTY WITH A FEW OF THE GOODS HE SNATCHED.



WANTED

THE CRIMINAL
Dusty the cat

THE CRIMES
Trespassing and theft

STOLEN ITEMS

1 baseball mitt
21 shoes
75 socks
102 gloves
231 towels

HORSE WORKS MAGIC

Florida, America

When Magic the miniature horse first visited an elderly woman who hadn't spoken in three years, the 60-centimetre-tall mare trotted right over and rested her head on the woman's lap. "Isn't she beautiful?" the woman said, shocking everyone. Thanks to Magic, she hasn't stopped talking.

Magic is a therapy horse. She visits people with health problems to make them feel better. "Everyone is excited by how tiny she is," says Magic's owner, Debbie Garcia-Bengochea. "She gives people love and attention and helps take their minds off their worries."

The small horse rides in cars and takes the lift to see patients. She nuzzles up to people who can't move around well and even has sported a tuxedo for a hospital patient's tea party. "She's a small horse," Debbie says. "But she leaves people with big smiles." — *C.M. Tomlin*



MAGIC (RIGHT) WITH HER BUDDY ALADDIN



MAGIC MAKES A NEW FRIEND

SUPERS

Fresh water or salt water? For one grumpy shark it's Zambezi-peasy!



ALEXANDER SAFONOV / GETTY (CLOSE UP);
PETE ATKINSON / GETTY (MAIN IMAGE)

HARKS

Many sharks are timid and shy, but there is one species that may win the title of the most aggressive animal on Earth. The Zambezi shark is pumped full of more testosterone than any living creature, making it perhaps the ocean's liveliest animal!

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Mention the name Zambezi shark outside Africa and most people will scratch their heads. Depending on where you're from, this species is also known as the shovelnose shark, Lake Nicaragua shark and Swan River whaler. This poor shark has one big identity crisis! The most common name for this

species is bull shark, earned for its broad and stocky features, blunt snout and energetic nature. And like bulls, this shark has a short temper and will even head-butt other marine animals before attacking them!

RIVER MEANDER

In other parts of the world, the Zambezi is known simply as the river shark. This is because unlike most sharks, they can survive in both salt water and fresh water because of special glands near their tails that help keep salt in their bodies, even when in fresh water. This means they can travel huge distances in conditions other sharks could only dream of! A Zambezi

was once even spotted 3 700 kilometres up the Amazon River in Peru!

Zambezi have been found in South Africa's river systems, including those in the Kruger National Park and the Breede River. The world's biggest Zambezi was caught here over two years ago. This four-metre monster was half a metre bigger than any other recorded specimen – that's around the length of Bakkies Botha and Victor Matfield together. That's one gigantic shark!

AT HOME IN THE SEA

The Zambezi can be spotted in fresh water channels, but is more likely to be found in tropical and subtropical

EW... CHEW WITH YOUR MOUTH CLOSED!

South Africa is well-known for the great white shark but we have a wonderful array of more than 98 species around our coastline!



LIKE ITS BIGGER COUSIN, THE GREAT WHITE, THE ZAMBEZI IS GREY ON THE TOP, WITH A WHITE UNDERBELLY.

ISTOCKPHOTO (TOP LEFT, TOP RIGHT):
FIONA AYERST (PHOTOGRAPHER); SOUTH AFRICAN SHARK
CONSERVANCY (MALE ZAMBEZI TAGGED)

bodies of ocean. Along with South Africa, the sharks live off the coast of Mozambique, as well as the far away shores of Costa Rica, The Bahamas, Australia and Burma.

They normally glide around shallow waters no more than 30 metres deep, but they can plunge down to 200 metres when they feel like it!

"Zambezi sharks are mostly homebodies; once they find a place they like, they tend to stick around," says shark expert Dr Simon Pierce of Eyes on the Horizon, a marine conservation organisation dedicated to protecting the marine life of Mozambique.

PUPS HOME ALONE

They are what is known as viviparous (impress your friends with that one!) which means that they are born alive. The mum can have up to thirteen babies. After giving birth she leaves them to fend for themselves.

These babies that survive being eaten by predators become impressive hunters that can accelerate at speeds that would make an Olympic sprinter proud. The Zambezi is a very efficient predator with a huge appetite. "Zambezi have an incredibly

diverse diet," says Dr. Pierce. "They've been recorded eating turtles, birds, dolphins, land mammals, crustaceans, bony fishes and other sharks and rays." There are even reports from Australia of a Zambezi attacking a racehorse in a river!

IT ALL MAKES SENSE

Like all sharks, the Zambezi relies on an extraordinary range of senses to help it detect prey, including one of the best senses of smell in the animal kingdom. Some sharks can detect a single drop of blood in an Olympic-sized swimming pool! Another amazing sense that sharks possess are special sensing organs known as ampullae of Lorenzini. These jelly-filled pores on the sharks' snout help them to detect prey in even the murkiest of waters.

SHARP TEETH

The most lethal weapon in the Zambezi's arsenal is their serrated teeth that allow them to saw through even the toughest of materials, like turtle shell and bone. So what happens if it damages its teeth when gnawing a snack? New teeth, move on forward! Sharks' teeth work on a conveyor belt

system. If they damage or lose them, new rows of teeth simply replace the old ones. Cool, unless you are a poor turtle on the receiving end of a chomp from a mighty Zambezi weighing nearly half a ton ...ouch!

A YUCKY SNACK!

You'd think a big shark with a big attitude would be a danger to us? Not so! Zambezi attacks on people are rare. People regularly dive unprotected by cages with Zambezi sharks. "Like a lot of animals as long as you have the right attitude and can read signals from the animal, there is little risk", says diver and underwater cameraman Chris Scarffe. Seen from below, swimmers or surfers can look a little like seals, a shark's preferred diet. They don't actually like the taste of human and after biting will often retreat and look for something more delicious. We're far too bony compared to a yummy blubbery seal.

BAD CATCH

Zambezi themselves have very few natural predators, though youngsters are sometimes targeted by bigger sharks and even crocodiles. The biggest

ZAMBEZIS ARE
GENERALLY
SOLITARY
HUNTERS.

threat facing them and other shark species, sadly, is us. Every year up to 100 million sharks (that's around three every second) are caught for the oil in their livers, their skin and meat. Most sharks are caught for their fins, which are used to create an Asian dish; shark fin soup. This has meant that many shark species are on the brink of extinction.

Sharks like the Zambezi deserve to be respected in the same way as other predators such as lions, tigers and bears. After all, they were not only around before us, but also long before the dinosaurs. They have even survived five mass extinctions.

Let's just hope future generations can enjoy them as much as we do.

Long live the shark!

BREEDER RIVER ZAMBEZI

In January 2009, an extraordinary discovery was made. For years there had been reports of large Zambezis cruising around the Breede River. Keen to find out the truth, a group of conservationists, scientists and anglers set out trying to catch one of these beasts.

They got more than they hoped for in their wildest dreams. An enormous, four-metre female Zambezi was captured. An acoustic tag was attached to her and she was released back into the river. Nicknamed Nyami Nyami, after the Zambezi River God, the shark was followed for 300 hours as she moved as far as 32 kilometres down the estuary looking for food.

Other tagging missions here have delivered even more remarkable results. One Zambezi, a large male, travelled over 2 000 kilometres, all the way to Bazaruto in Mozambique. The information from these tags is helping scientists to learn how Zambezis use water channels. This amazing technology is painting a picture of a shark, capable of travelling long distances and adapting to many environments.



A ZAMBEZI TAGGED IN THE
BREEDER RIVER

I'M NOT A SEAL! UNDERWATER
PHOTOGRAPHER GETS A
CLOSE-UP VIEW.

20 CUTE ANIMALS

BY JEN RINI

HARP SEAL

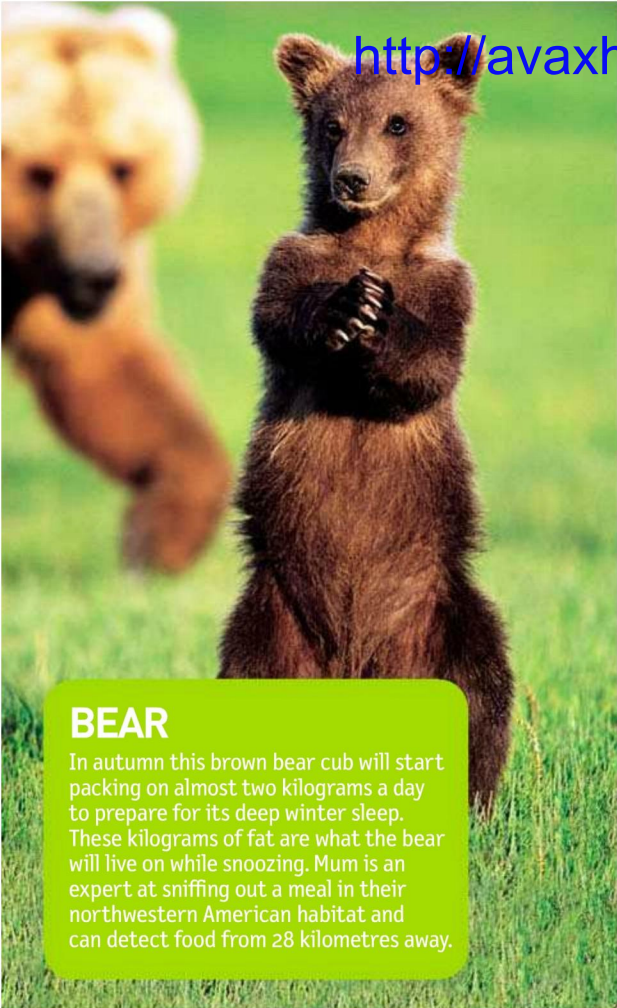
If you're ever in snowy Arctic Russia or Canada, walk carefully—you might mistake a newborn harp seal for a pile of snow! At about two weeks old the pup sheds its furry white coat for one that's grey and smooth, perfect for skimming the ocean to hunt for small fish. While hunting, harp seals can hold their breath for up to 20 minutes while they dive to depths of 240 metres or more. That's as deep as the Eiffel Tower is tall.



CHEETAHS

Under the shield of tall African grass these cheetah cubs are hidden from hungry lions and hyenas. The cubs' long, fuzzy coats, called mantles, camouflage them from danger. As they grow, the mantles recede, but they'll keep their manes until they're about two years old.





BEAR

In autumn this brown bear cub will start packing on almost two kilograms a day to prepare for its deep winter sleep. These kilograms of fat are what the bear will live on while snoozing. Mum is an expert at sniffing out a meal in their northwestern American habitat and can detect food from 28 kilometres away.

RACCOON

This young raccoon might be an expert climber – many raccoons spend their first few months living in a nest in a tree hole. Grown raccoons rely more on touch than sight and smell to find meals such as frogs, bird eggs, insects and even snakes.



© JAN VERMEER / FOTO NATURA / MINDEN PICTURES (HARP SEAL); © M. DENIS-HUOT / PHOTOLIBRARY (CHEETAH); EASTCOTT MOMATIUK / GETTY IMAGES (BEAR); GERRY ELLIS / DIGITAL VISION (RACCOON); © SUZI ESZTERHAS / MINDEN PICTURES (ORANGUTAN)



ORANG-UTAN

This baby orang-utan may have figured out the best part of life in the trees: just hanging out!

Orang-utans spend up to 95 percent of their time high up in trees on the Indonesian islands of Borneo and Sumatra. They sleep, eat and play in nests so big that a ten-year-old can stretch out in them.



GIANT PANDA

You *could* say a giant panda's stomach is a bottomless bamboo pit. Pandas chomp on bamboo plants up to 14 hours a day, moving only to search for more bamboo in China's forests. They've even developed a "false thumb" – an enlarged wrist bone that helps them grip the plants. All that eating doesn't leave much time for rest – they sleep for only two to four hours at a time.

SEA TURTLE

This baby loggerhead sea turtle is a true survivor. First it broke out of an egg the size of a table tennis ball. Then it dug itself out from a buried nest on a beach. After that it scurried from the beach to the ocean, dodging predators such as crabs and herons. *You* try doing that with flippers instead of feet! And still no sigh of relief – once it reached the surf, the turtle swam for 24 hours straight to move further out to sea, where it will be easier to avoid predators.



DEER

Deer often sniff to identify each other or just to say hello. These fawns may need a friendly face by now – they've spent their first few weeks almost completely hidden, their spotted coats blending in with their forest homes. After three or four months the spots fade and the brown coat grows thick for the winter.





WILD BOAR

You wouldn't want to mess with these little guys once they're about a year old. That's when wild boars start growing tusks. They use them to scratch trees (wild boar code for "this is *my* space") and defend themselves from predators or other boars. Like their pig cousins, wild boars are thought to be supersmart and communicate with a complex set of grunts and squeals.

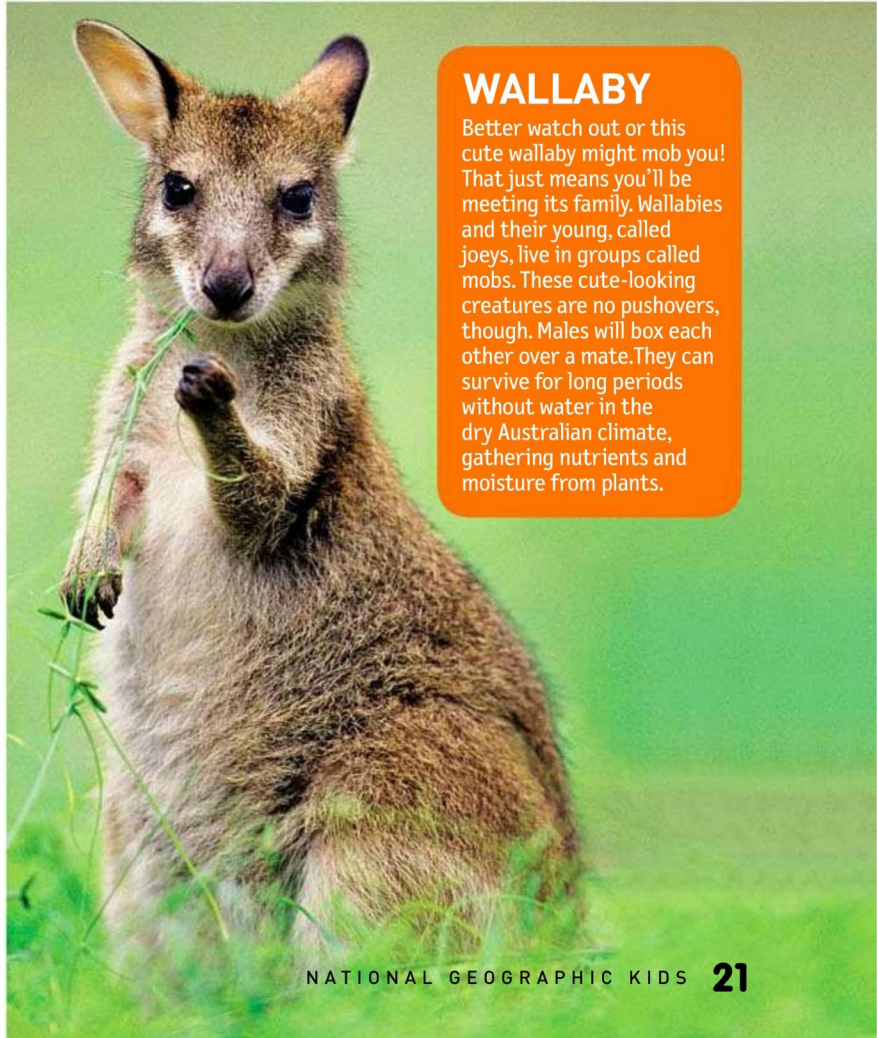
HEDGEHOG

This European hedgehog may look cute, but giving it a squeeze could be a problem. About 7 000 spiky quills cover its body. When they're attacked by predators such as owls, hedgehogs curl up into prickly balls—ouch!—that are nearly impossible to budge. Badgers are one of the few predators strong enough to pry open a hedgehog.



WALLABY

Better watch out or this cute wallaby might mob you! That just means you'll be meeting its family. Wallabies and their young, called joeys, live in groups called mobs. These cute-looking creatures are no pushovers, though. Males will box each other over a mate. They can survive for long periods without water in the dry Australian climate, gathering nutrients and moisture from plants.





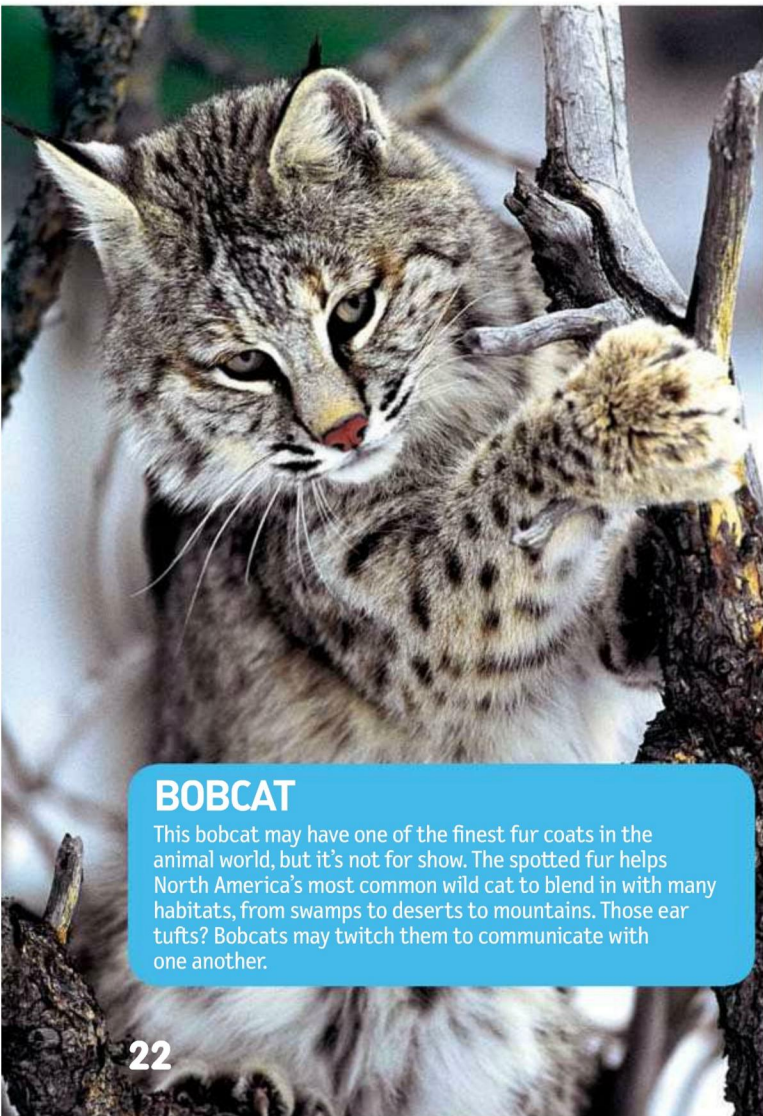
COYOTE

A howl from a coyote pup may sound more like a high-pitched squeal, but hearing howls from the entire pack can sound a little spooky. Don't worry—they're mostly just checking on their pals. Coyotes use certain types of sounds to communicate in different situations. One type of howl rallies the pack for a hunt. Another helps a lost coyote find his friends. No wonder coyotes are often portrayed as extremely brainy in Native American folklore.



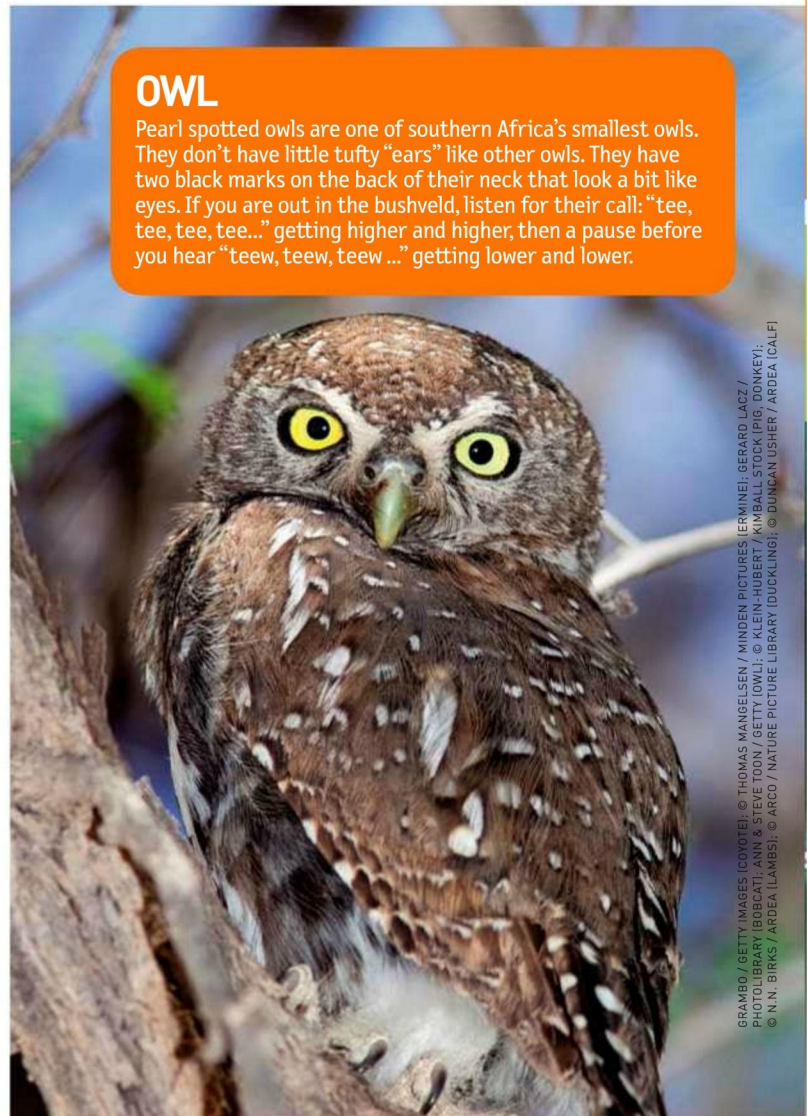
ERMINE

Hares, beware! This creature could be your enemy. Silent and sneaky, the 30 centimetre-long ermine can pounce on much larger prey, such as an Arctic hare. The stealthy stalker gets help from its changing coat, which is white during winter and brown in spring and summer—perfect for blending in with its surroundings.



BOBCAT

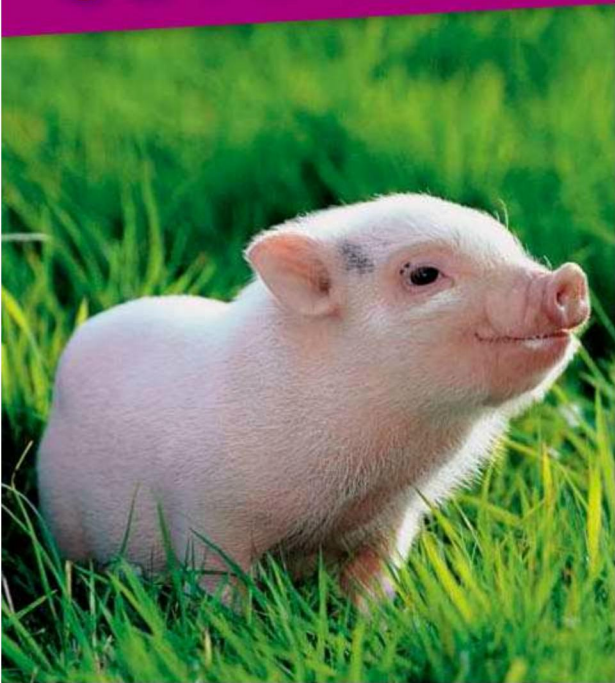
This bobcat may have one of the finest fur coats in the animal world, but it's not for show. The spotted fur helps North America's most common wild cat to blend in with many habitats, from swamps to deserts to mountains. Those ear tufts? Bobcats may twitch them to communicate with one another.



OWL

Pearl spotted owls are one of southern Africa's smallest owls. They don't have little tufty "ears" like other owls. They have two black marks on the back of their neck that look a bit like eyes. If you are out in the bushveld, listen for their call: "tee, tee, tee, tee..." getting higher and higher, then a pause before you hear "teew, teew, teew ..." getting lower and lower.

CUTE BARNYARD ANIMALS!



PIG

This little guy may not look so cute once he finds himself a mud hole. Pigs love to wallow in mud – it's like natural air-conditioning. They can't sweat, so rolling around in a giant mud bath is like blasting a fan directly on their bodies. The mud also acts as a natural sunscreen.

DONKEY

This type of miniature donkey once lived in wild herds on the Italian islands of Sicily and Sardinia. Today they are mostly kept as pets and have friendly reputations.

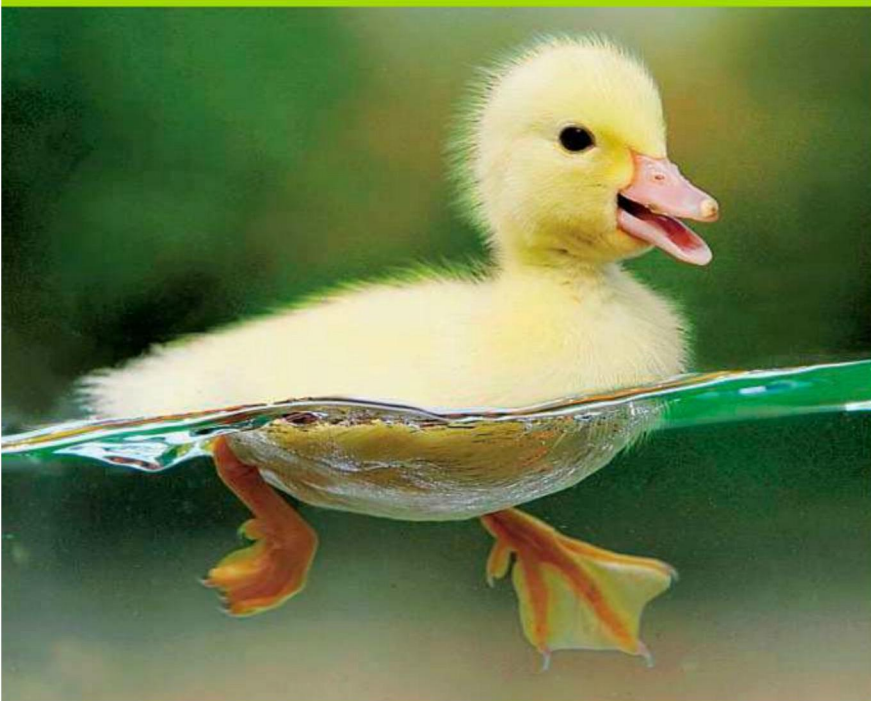


LAMBS

The wool from these adorable lambs is used to make carpets, but wool from other kinds of sheep is often used to make clothing. Depending on the breed, one sheep can produce enough wool each year for ten jerseys. They keep you warm *and* warm your heart!

DUCK

A duckling is a true copycat. When ducklings hatch, they mimic their mother's every action, from eating to swimming to waddling. The mimicking behaviour is called imprinting. But they don't copy Mum's look. Ducklings won't replace their yellow fuzz with adult feathers till they're about two months old.



CALF

This calf may help its buddies take over the world! There are about 1.5 billion cows on Earth – that's nearly thirty times as many cows as there are people in South Africa.

WIN!**LISTEN UP BOYS
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Send your entries to competition@ngkids.co.za and include "Cricket" in the subject heading. We'll need your name, surname and contact number, too. Or SMS "NGK CRICKET" followed by your answer, name, surname and city to 34970*. Terms and conditions apply.

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1. The prizes will be awarded to entries drawn randomly by computer after the closing date. 2. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 3. The prizes are not transferable and may not be converted to cash. 4. You may enter as many times as you wish. 5. Please supply a residential, rather than a PO Box address. 6. Entries sent by registered post will not be collected. 7. Staff of Media24 (Ltd) and their immediate family, sponsors and their advertising agencies may not enter. 8. Transport costs to RMCSE clinics are not included in the prize. 9. Prize winners must be able to attend the clinics on the dates stipulated above. 10. Winners will be notified by telephone. 11. This competition is on behalf of RMCSE, who is also responsible for the delivery of prizes within South Africa. 12. Participants and winners of this competition indemnify and hold National Geographic Kids, Media24 (Ltd) and the sponsor harmless against any liability, claim, damage or loss that may result from participating or winning these prizes. 13. By entering the competition you agree to receive further communication and direct marketing material from Media24 (Ltd.).

**CRICKET
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12 to 15
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December 2011
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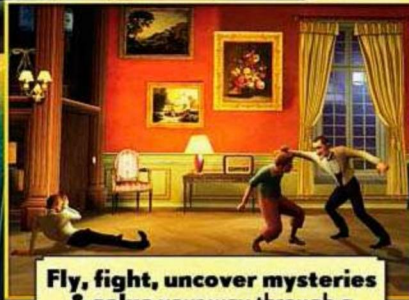
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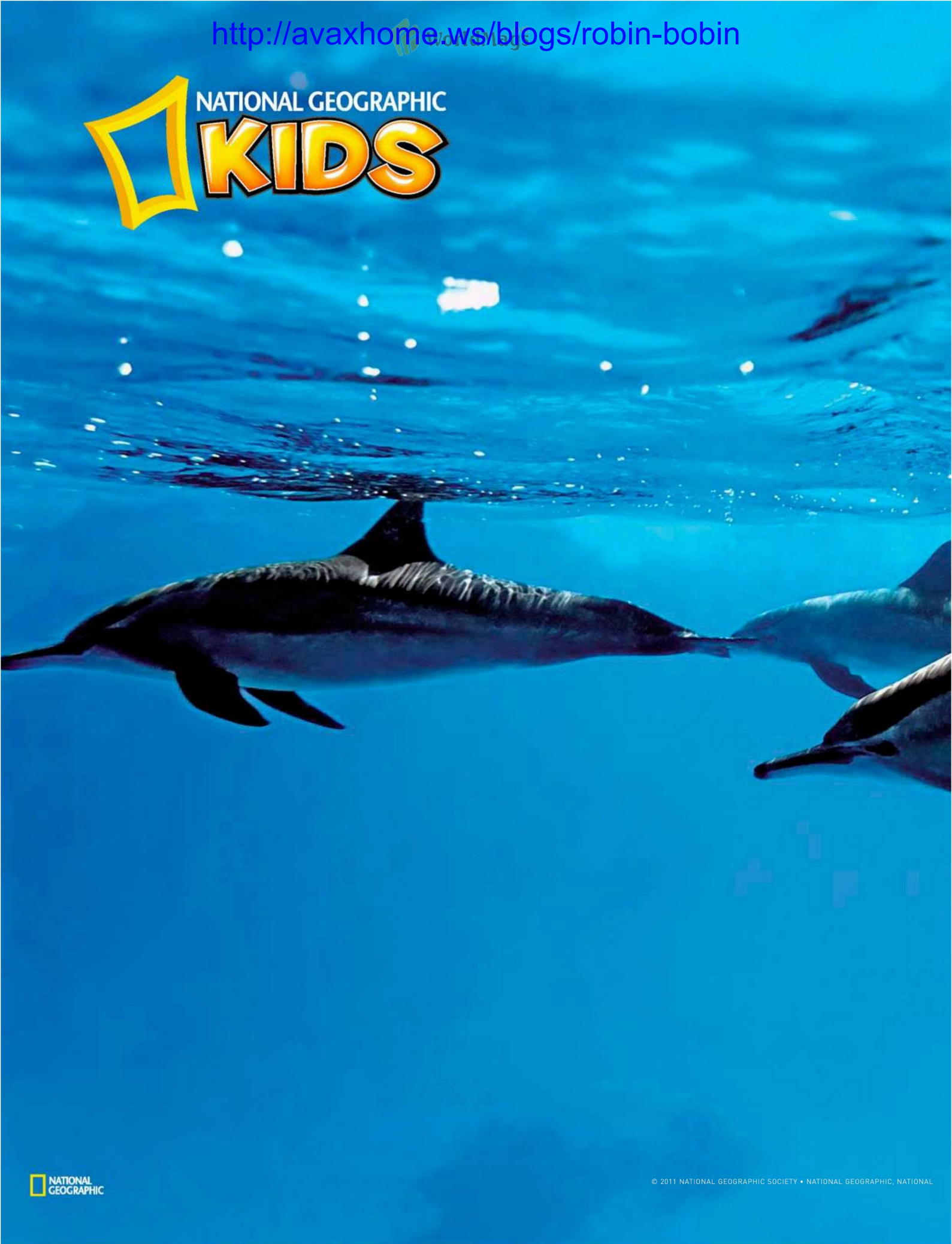
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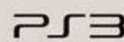
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DOG UNLEASHES TONGUE

How do you know Puggy the Pekingese likes you? He might give you a playful slap with his tongue. Measuring 11,4 centimetres, Puggy's record-length tongue is about as long as a cooldrink can and often hangs out of his mouth. People aren't quite sure what to make of him. "Once someone thought he had a frog in his mouth," owner Becky Stanford says. But despite his difference, Puggy's just like any other dog – he just might take a little longer to chew his food.
— Sarah Youngson



WHOOPEE CUSHION BLASTS HAIR BACK



This gives a whole new meaning to the term "wind instrument." Visitors at a music festival in England bounced their rumps onto the world's largest whoopee cushion to compose an, um, unusual kind of song. Created to demonstrate how wind instruments such as trumpets and flutes work, the whoopee cushion sure produced some strange tunes. — Sarah Youngson



BIG SHOE STEPS UP

You'd definitely need a giant closet if you owned this takkie. The largest sports shoe stands 1,7 metres tall and weighs 150 kilograms. Made from fake leather, the shoe took three months to build and helped raise funds for cancer research. Looks like the shoe's creators took some huge steps for a good cause. — Kait Gallagher

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THE OCEAN CRUISE

WHO: Southern humpback whale

DISTANCE: up to 5 000 kilometres per seasonal migration

MEANS OF TRANSPORT: Swimming

HOLIDAY SNACKS: Krill, plankton and small fish

DESTINATION: Warm waters off South America, South Africa and Australia

REASON FOR TRAVEL: Breeding and mating

In the winter humpback whales head north from Antarctica to enjoy the warmer waters and bays around the

coasts. You can spot humpback whales during September and October in Hermanus, chilling in the warm Indian Ocean. They breed and calf and live off the blubber (fat) in their bodies. They socialise and relax and when winter ends, they begin their long journey back to the polar regions to hunt for food.



THE FAMILY HOLIDAY

WHO: Porcupine reindeer

DISTANCE: 500 to 1 000 kilometres

MEANS OF TRANSPORT:

Running and walking

HOLIDAY SNACKS:

Grasses, lichens, shrubs and mushrooms

DESTINATION:

The coastal plains and foothills of northeastern Alaska

REASON FOR TRAVEL: Better weather conditions

The reindeer migrate between summer and winter grazing grounds. Their summer range provides nutritious food that helps the reindeer grow healthy and fat before winter. But the summer range is a cold and unpleasant place during winter, so they move to where conditions are nice and sunny. The herd can be up to 123 000 animals strong, so it is quite a big family holiday! As the new calves are born in spring, the whole herd gathers on their return for a big family reunion.



RE GETAWAYS

BY JANI COETZEE

Humans are not the only beings on Earth that go on holiday!
Many animals migrate to greener pastures for a break from the cold weather. NG KIDS went on holiday with some of them!



THE QUICK BREAKAWAY

WHO: Christmas Island red crabs

DISTANCE: 8 to 10 kilometres

MEANS OF TRANSPORT: Walking

HOLIDAY SNACKS: Fallen leaves and fruit

DESTINATION: The shores of Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean

REASON FOR TRAVEL: Mating and laying eggs

At first you hear a distant rumble and clicking. Then thousands of red crabs start emerging from their shelters, ready for their annual migration to the coast. To avoid the

heavy downpour during the monsoon season on Christmas Island, 50 million red land crabs migrate over roads, through towns and down cliffs to reach the beach where they were born. After mating, the female crabs spend some leisure time in the burrows before they scatter to the ocean to lay their eggs. Each female can lay up to a 100 000 eggs!



THE ADVENTURE HOLIDAY

WHO: Arctic tern

DISTANCE: Almost 70 000 kilometres per year

MEANS OF TRANSPORT: Flying

HOLIDAY SNACKS: Fish, insects and krill

DESTINATION: The Weddel Sea, close to Antarctica and back

REASON FOR TRAVEL: Breeding and feeding

The Arctic tern likes to live on the edge. They migrate the furthest of any known animal. They breed on the shores of the Arctic Ocean in

the northern hemisphere's summer and they feed over the oceans of the southern hemisphere half a year later – in the southern hemisphere's summer. They catch insects and fish while flying and can hover in mid-air. They hardly ever land, which makes their journey quite tiring. Terns can live to be as old as 30 years, so the total distance they fly in a lifetime can be well over two million kilometres. That's around three return trips to the moon – now that's extreme!



HAUNTED HOLIDAYS

Ghosts might be part of the tour
at these creepy sites.

BY ZACHARY PETIT AND JANI COETZEE

Holidays at historical places can make the past come to life. But some people believe that at a few destinations, living history means that ghosts could be part of the tour. You might learn about hotels, old houses and early settlements at the sites on these pages, but are spooky spirits trying to teach you even more? Decide for yourself if these places are just creepy... or haunted.

REALLY SPIRITED HOUSE

WHAT Winchester Mystery House

WHERE San José, California, in America

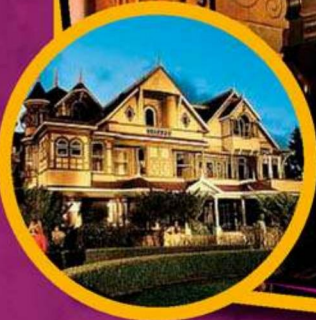
TAKE THE TOUR... when you've had your fill of the Golden Gate Bridge and other nearby San Francisco attractions.

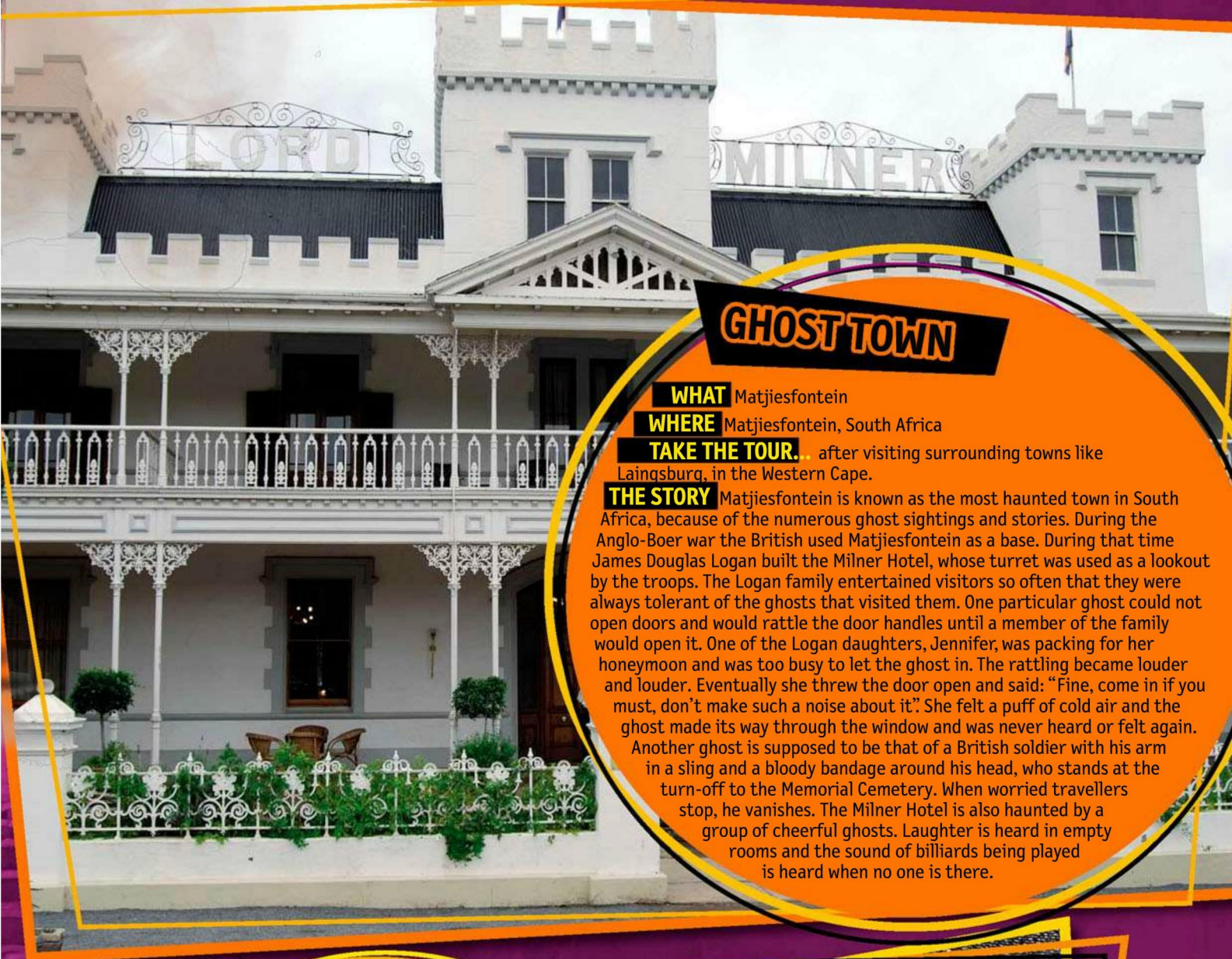
THE STORY If you lived on the prairie in the late 1800s, there's a good chance your dad would've owned a Winchester rifle. The firearm could shoot multiple bullets without reloading after every shot. That made it easier to get dinner on the table, but it terrified Sarah Winchester, whose husband's family invented that rifle.

Legend has it that the spirits of people killed by Winchester firearms told her to begin building them a house and to keep going ...or else. So in 1884 workers began constructing a mansion filled with bizarre twists and turns, supposedly to confuse evil spirits. One door opens to a three-metre plunge outside. A staircase runs into the ceiling.

Today the ghosts that reportedly haunt the labyrinth are thought to be Sarah's long-gone house workers. People say they've seen two maids and a man who bears a strange resemblance to one of Sarah's carpenters. Others have heard ghostly organ music. Nobody truly knows why Sarah built this home. And if her staff is still around, they're not saying anything.

TOM BERNARD (BIG PICTURE); JOHN VAN HORN (HALLWAY); ©ISTOCKPHOTO (MARY); FIONA THOMSON (MATJESFONTEIN);
FOOLINE STUDIO / GETTY IMAGES (BACKGROUND); GHOSTED IMAGES DIGITALLY COMPOSED.





GHOST TOWN

WHAT Matjiesfontein

WHERE Matjiesfontein, South Africa

TAKE THE TOUR... after visiting surrounding towns like Lainsburg, in the Western Cape.

THE STORY Matjiesfontein is known as the most haunted town in South Africa, because of the numerous ghost sightings and stories. During the Anglo-Boer war the British used Matjiesfontein as a base. During that time James Douglas Logan built the Milner Hotel, whose turret was used as a lookout by the troops. The Logan family entertained visitors so often that they were always tolerant of the ghosts that visited them. One particular ghost could not open doors and would rattle the door handles until a member of the family would open it. One of the Logan daughters, Jennifer, was packing for her honeymoon and was too busy to let the ghost in. The rattling became louder and louder. Eventually she threw the door open and said: "Fine, come in if you must, don't make such a noise about it". She felt a puff of cold air and the ghost made its way through the window and was never heard or felt again. Another ghost is supposed to be that of a British soldier with his arm in a sling and a bloody bandage around his head, who stands at the turn-off to the Memorial Cemetery. When worried travellers stop, he vanishes. The Milner Hotel is also haunted by a group of cheerful ghosts. Laughter is heard in empty rooms and the sound of billiards being played is heard when no one is there.

HAUNTED HOTEL

WHAT Talbot Hotel

WHERE Northamptonshire, England

TAKE THE TOUR... visit the hotel after a drive through the beautiful English countryside.

THE STORY The Talbot Hotel was made famous by the ghost of Mary, Queen of Scots. Mary was kept in custody for 19 years in a number of castles and manor houses in England. She was tried and executed in 1587 for treason for her alleged involvement in three plots to assassinate Queen Elizabeth I. The hotel's staircase used to belong to Fotheringhay Castle and Mary passed down it on her final walk to the executioner's block. Her ghost still appears in a long white dress and stands at the top of the stairs or by the window of the conference room. On one occasion a guest heard the sound of a woman crying in room No.5, yet the room was empty when someone went to help her. That was on the anniversary of Mary's death. She has also been seen looking down into the garden from a window on the landing and is easily recognisable by her white blouse and white cap.



WACKY HOTELS

Check out these fun
water-themed places
to stay on holiday.

BY KRISTIN BAIRD RATTINI

W atery fun at most hotels usually means just a dip in the pool. These three weird but cool places use water in such wacky ways that they'll make a huge splash on anyone's holiday. So hold your breath and dive in!

**MAGIC
MOUNTAIN
LODGE**

**SLEEP UNDER
A WATERFALL!**

**BURJ
AL ARAB**

WHERE: Dubai, United Arab Emirates

HOW MUCH: From R8 000 to nearly R150 000 a night

WHY IT'S COOL: No beach? No problem! The builders of the Burj Al Arab made their own island so that this sail-shaped hotel appears to be cruising 280 metres into the Arabian Gulf. Rising more than 300 metres, this offshore marvel shimmers inside with enough gold leaf to cover more than two Olympic-sized swimming pools. A simulated submarine ride takes you to a seafood

restaurant with a giant aquarium (right). Nearby is the Wild Wadi water park, which is free for guests.

**STAY IN A GIANT
SHIP'S SAIL!**

INSIDE



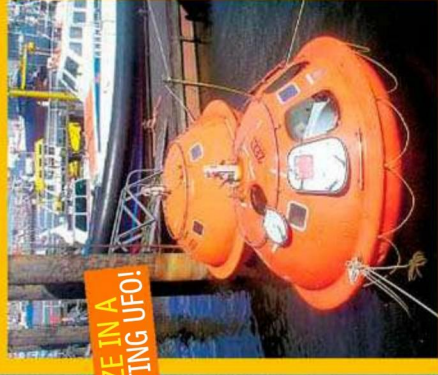


WHERE: Puerto Fuy, Chile

HOW MUCH: R1 200 to R2 000 a night

WHY IT'S COOL: This 20-metre-tall hotel looks like a volcano. But instead of lava, a waterfall erupts out of the top and continuously cascades down the sides. Inspired by nearby Mocho Choshuenco volcano and Huilo-Huilo Falls, the lodge draws its waterfall from a local river. The water returns to the river through a canal. Want more excitement? The lodge lies in the protected Huilo-Huilo Biological Reserve, a rainforest of 1 000 square kilometres. You can mountain bike or kayak, zoom along the longest zip line course in South America or ski all year on the glacier-covered volcano.

CAPSULE HOTEL



SNOOZE IN A FLOATING UFO!

WHERE: The Hague, Netherlands

HOW MUCH: R650 to R1 600 a night

WHY IT'S COOL: You could call these orange saucers UFOs – Unusual Floating Objects! These pods were once rescue capsules for workers on offshore oil rigs. They're now floating hotel rooms. Docked in a canal, the basic capsule comes with a seat, a toilet and a hammock made from old fishing nets. A “superdeluxe” version livens things up with a DVD player, disco ball and karaoke machine. Just don't rock this boat too hard.



BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE NEW MOVIE

ALVIN and the CHIPMUNKS

Chipwrecked



**More About
Chipmunks**

A newborn chipmunk weighs about 2.5 grams.

MUNKS: ecked

PRESTO, CHANGE-O

Alvin's manager, Dave, tells him it's bedtime, but the chipmunk has other plans. He is wearing a tux beneath his pajamas. He changes quickly and sneaks out. To create this scene, animators placed one digital drawing of Alvin sporting pajamas over another of him decked out in a tux. They then programmed a computer to rip off the top image quickly, revealing Alvin in his tuxedo underneath.

SLIP 'N' SLIDE

When a giant gust of wind catches Alvin's kite, Simon ties it to a lounge chair to keep his friend from blowing off the ship. But the wind drags the chair all over the deck. To make the chair zip around at top speed, stunt coordinator Mickey Giacomazzi rubbed down the deck with slippery beeswax. Then stunt people pulled the chair across the deck with cables. Animators later erased the cables from the movie and added the kite string and chipmunks.

HOT STUFF

An erupting volcano sends the chipmunks running for cover. It had to look as if sand were flying everywhere as lava chunks fell on the beach. The crew buried pots filled with small explosives in the ground and detonated them with a remote control. Globes of falling lava were added digitally.

BY JOHNNA RIZZO

In the new movie *Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked*, the furry bandmates hit the high seas for a cruise holiday. But Alvin, Simon and Theodore end up stranded on an island with a volatile volcano. The movie mixes live action and animation, so how did human actors interact with digital characters? NG KIDS burrowed behind the scenes for answers to this and other secrets.

DANCING QUEENS

Aboard the cruise ship, the Chipettes – an all-girl chipmunk band – have a dancing contest with some humans. A human dancer kicks Brittany into the air, bumping her off another person's hip. Moviemakers shot the humans dancing, then digitally added the Chipettes. To get the humans acting as if they were volleying around chipmunks, choreographers bounced stuffed animals off them during rehearsals.

WHATEVER FLOATS YOUR BOAT

Dave takes off on a hang glider to save the chipmunks when Alvin's kite carries them away. Ian, a mean music producer who wants to break up the band, grabs Dave's legs to stop him. They both end up falling into the ocean. Dressed as a pelican – the ship's mascot – Ian bobs in the water like a buoy. To float, the actor playing Ian wore a life vest around his legs and hips like a nappy. The rest of his costume was filled with bits of foam pool noodles.

A chipmunk's underground home, called a burrow, has separate chambers for sleeping, storing food and caring for babies.



When they want to warn other chipmunks of danger, these tiny mammals often let out a loud *chip-chip-chip* noise.

The cheeks of a chipmunk can hold more than 70 sunflower seeds.

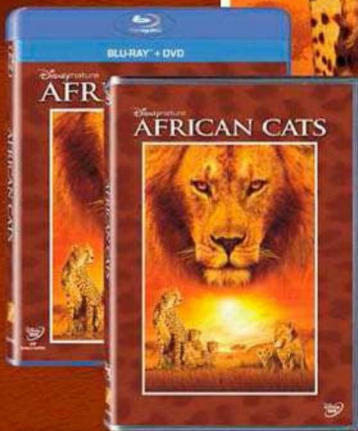
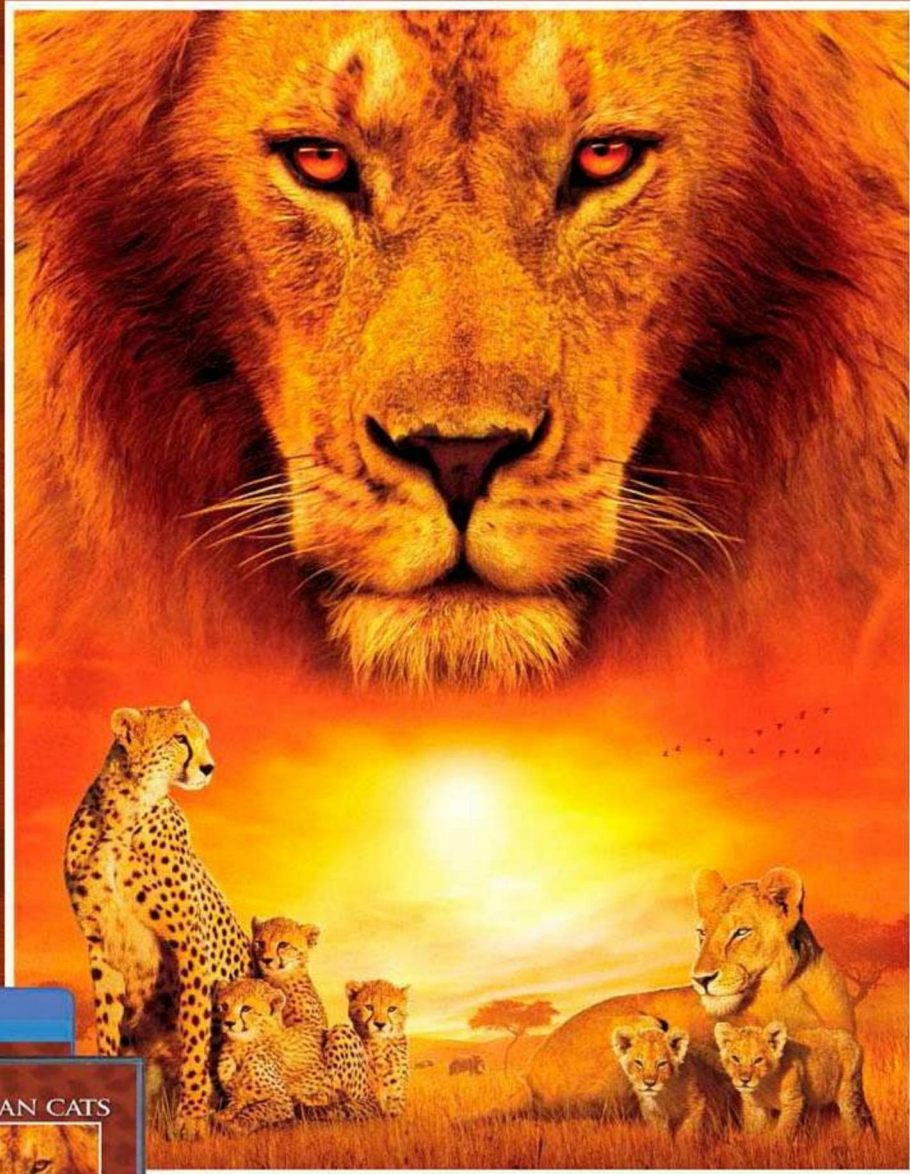


COURTESY TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX (BIG IMAGE); OLEKSIY MARK / SHUTTERSTOCK (LIFE RING); TOM MCHUGH / PHOTO RESEARCHERS, INC. (BURROW); GETTY IMAGES (CHIPMUNK CHEEKS)

<http://avaxhome.ws/blogs/robin-bobin>

Disney nature

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Disney nature

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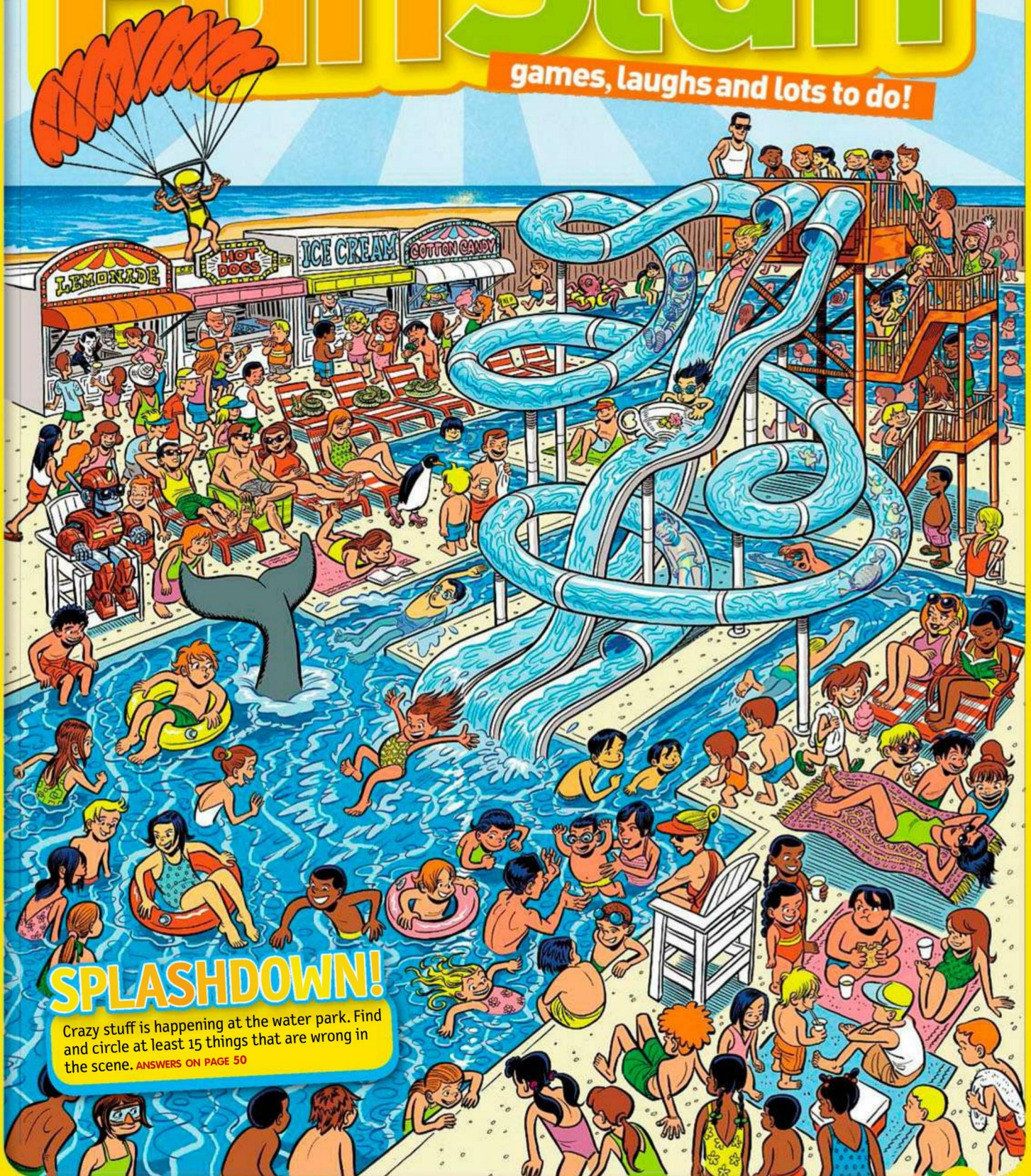
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Look & Listen
For the Fans

Fun Stuff

games, laughs and lots to do!



SPLASHDOWN!

Crazy stuff is happening at the water park. Find and circle at least 15 things that are wrong in the scene. ANSWERS ON PAGE 50

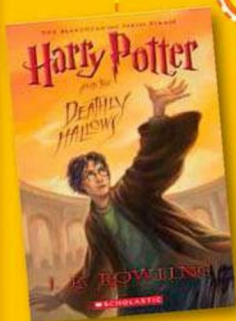
15 FUN Things

Ideas for Family Fun

- 1 Take a trip to an aquarium.** See who can find the most saltwater creatures in 20 minutes.

- 2 Start a family book club.** Have everyone read the same book, then talk about it over dinner.

- 3 Visit a farmer's market** to find out what fruit and vegetables grow well in your area. Each family member picks one local favourite or tries something new.



- 4 Make a family notebook** to celebrate each day. Have everyone write a sentence that begins "My favourite part of today was ..."

- 5 Get your game on!** Challenge your family to a new board game or video game. The winner gets to choose a movie or another activity for the next week.

- 6 Create a summer fun kit.** Add items that everyone can play with at the beach or pool.



- 7 Organise a hiking club.** Each week someone chooses a different place for a walk or hike, whether it's around the neighbourhood or in a national park.





8

Travel using your taste buds.

Go on an around-the-world picnic with your family in which each person chooses a food from a different country.

9

Search for the stars!

Using a seasonal map of the night sky, ask each family member to locate a different constellation.

10

Give back.

Find an organisation in your community where your whole family can volunteer.



11

Make your next holiday

a true family affair. Ask everyone to come up with a list of places to go, activities to do and things to see. Then take turns picking from each list to create the best holiday ever.

12

Have a dress-up party!

Pick a summer night to wear costumes and tell ghost stories.

13

Ask each family member

to photograph a day in the life of another. Vote on the best photos of each person and add them to a scrapbook.

14

Grow your own herb garden.

Each family member raises something different, such as oregano, basil or rosemary. Plant them either in your garden or in containers near a sunny window. Use the fresh herbs at your next pizza night.



15

See who can

blow the biggest bubble gum bubble.

sports funnies

uh-oh!

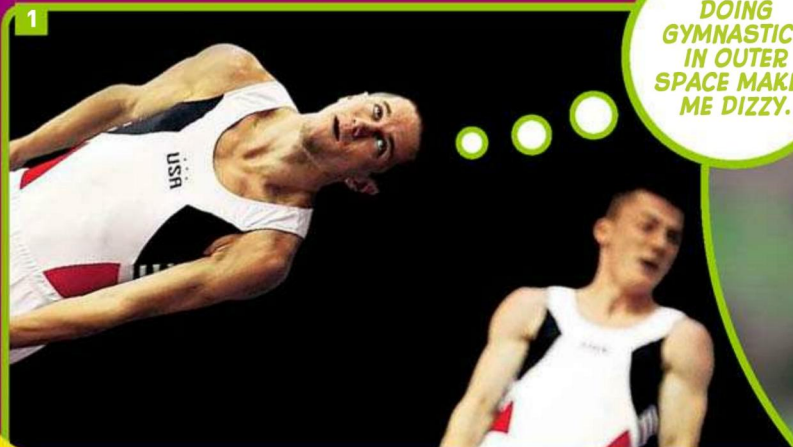
BY KELLEY MILLER

Logan Dooley (left) and Steven Gluckstein of America perform their synchronised trampoline routine at the 2009 Trampoline Gymnastics World Championships in St Petersburg, Russia.

Yelena Slesarenko of Russia reacts to her high jump qualification at the 2009 IAAF World Championships in Athletics in Berlin, Germany.

DOH!
I FORGOT
TO FEED MY
FISH THIS
MORNING.

DOING
GYMNASTICS
IN OUTER
SPACE MAKES
ME DIZZY.



© ANATOLY MALTSSEV / EPA / CORBIS (1); © BERND THIESSEN / CORBIS (2)

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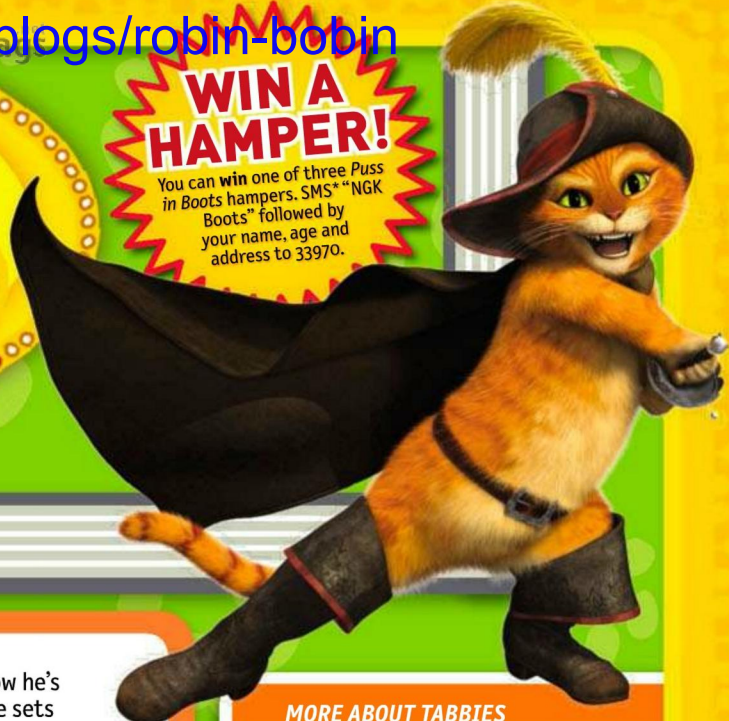
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MORE COLOURS THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE

FUN factory

WIN A HAMPER!

You can win one of three Puss in Boots hampers. SMS "NGK Boots" followed by your name, age and address to 33970.

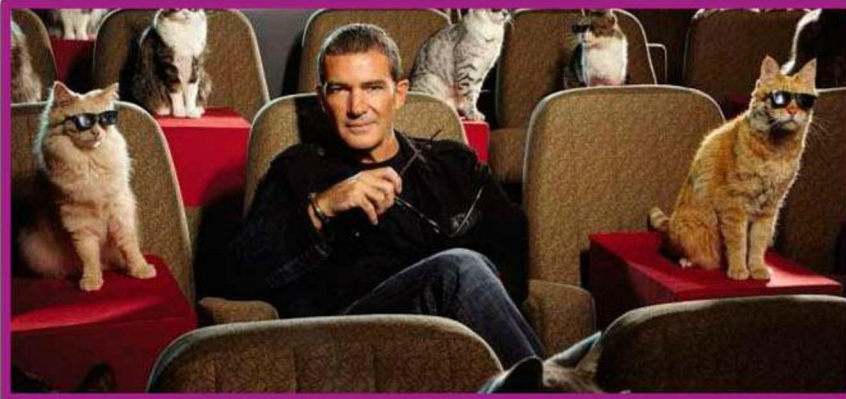


WATCH LIST ↓



PUSS IN BOOTS 3D

Puss first stole the show as a soft-hearted hired assassin in *Shrek* and now he's back in his own adventure. Long before he even meets the green ogre, he sets off to save his town with help from Kitty Softpaws and Humpty Dumpty. The furry feline is voiced by Antonio Banderas and he chatted to us about the movie and his pets.



NGK: Did you base the character of Puss on one of your cats?

AB: No, he is based on one of the producer of *Shrek's* cats who takes himself very seriously.

NGK: Do you have cats?

AB: I have five. I like their independence and elegance. I like dogs for their loyalty and they are easier to manipulate than cats.

NGK: What are your cats like?

AB: Penny Lane is brownish black, very thin and very feisty and she talks a lot—

meow, meow, meow, all day long. Maxwell loves to be petted and caressed and be close to people. Domino has fantastic fur, all white. You love to pet him. He has a moustache and he looks a bit like Elton John. Betty is his sister but she has brownish fur—an ochre colour. And another cat is the caretaker of our house's cat. She is fat and grey and doesn't like us.

Puss in Boots opens nationwide on 2 December.

MORE ABOUT TABBIES

All orange cats are tabbies, but the markings may be so faint that the colour appears solid.

Tabbies are more likely to be male, only two in ten are females.

The word "tabby" derives from a striped silk cloth made in Attabiyah, a neighbourhood of Baghdad, Iraq.

Other famous ginger cats include: Jock, who belonged to Winston Churchill and attended England's cabinet meetings during World War 2 and the cartoon cat Garfield.



BOOKWORM ↓

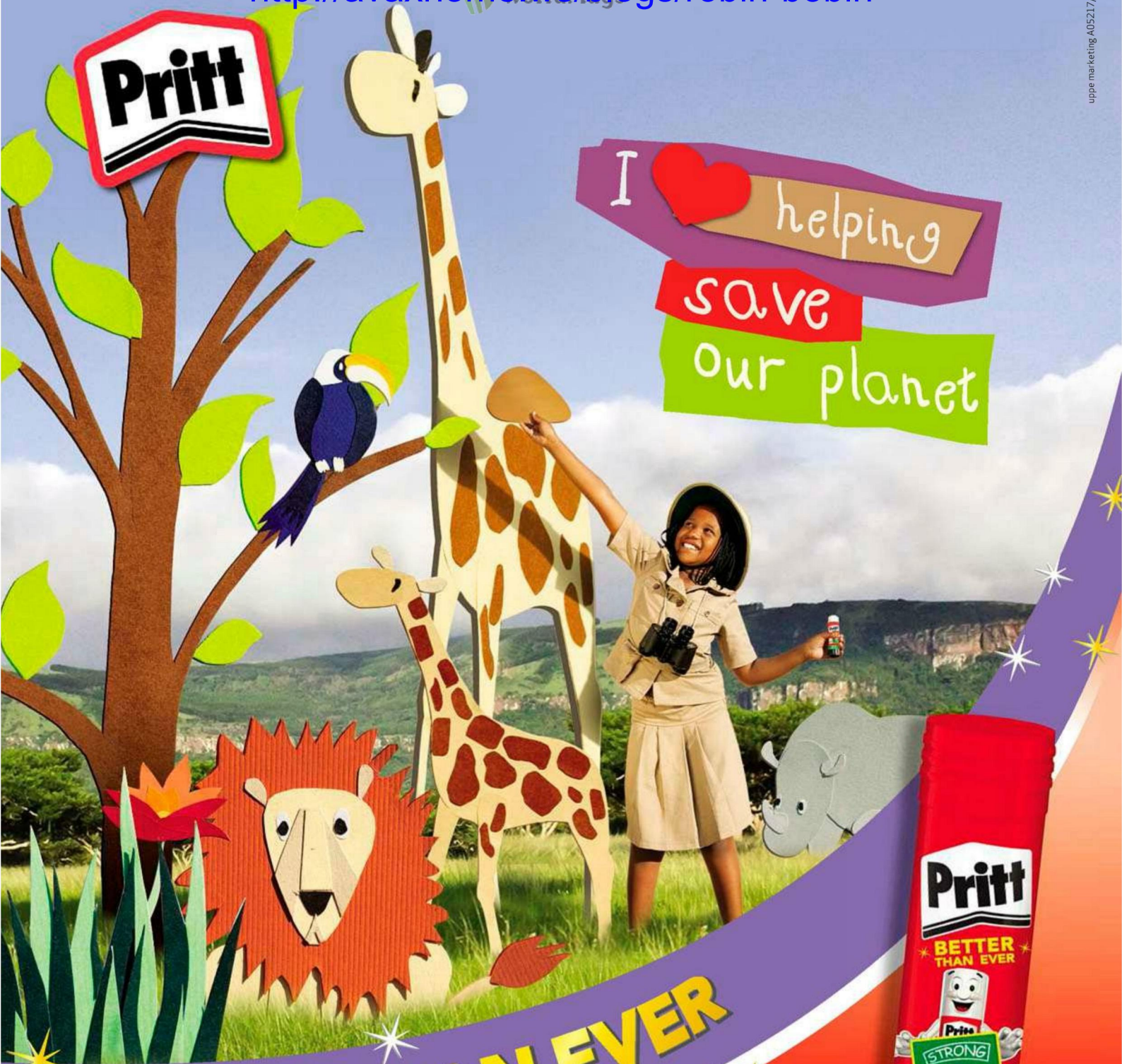
GENERATOR REX: MIRROR MIRROR Cartoon Network

The fair has come to town and Rex goes to check it out. But danger is waiting for Rex in the Hall of Mirrors! During a battle, a portal to an alternative dimension opens, unleashing mirror versions of Rex's enemies! But the Mirror Pack seems to want to help Rex. But can he trust them? If you loved the Cartoon Network series, *Generator Rex*, you'll love the new series of books!



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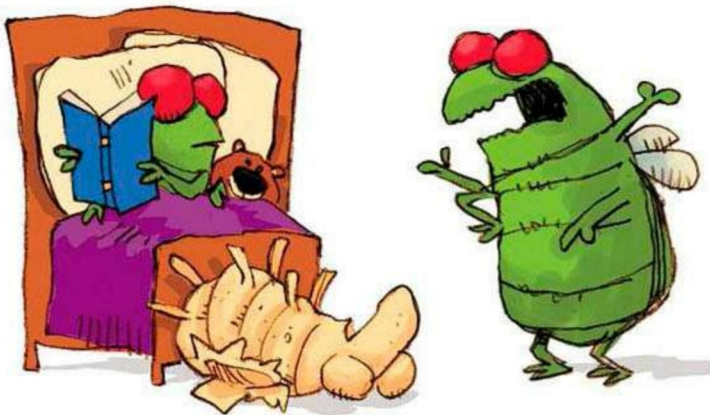
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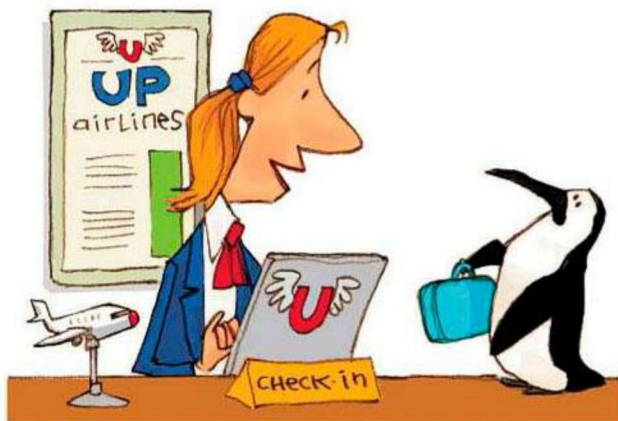
The Funnies



**"I DON'T CARE IF YOU ARE A GECKO...
YOU CAN'T HANG AROUND THE HOUSE"**



**"HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL
YOU..."**



"I'M SORRY, BUT YOU KNOW THE RULES."



"OPEN WIDE AND SAY 'PEEP'."

WHAT YOU NEED

- A sheet of gold card
- Plastic jewels and rhinestones
- Glitter glue
- Glue
- Scissors
- Pencil

How to make a crown



WHAT YOU DO

- Use a pencil to draw a crown on the gold card.
- Carefully cut on the lines.
- Decorate the cutout of your crown by glueing on the plastic jewels.
- Leave it to dry.
- Now ask your mum to wrap the cut out card round your head and use the glue to stick the two ends together. Now you're part of the royal family!

DID YOU KNOW?

The word ruby comes from the latin ruber, meaning red.

DID YOU KNOW?

The largest diamond ever found was the Cullinan diamond in South Africa. It was cut into nine pieces and used in the Crown Jewels, which are on display in the Tower of London in England.

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SAFARI



Just Joking

Spectacled caiman



**KNOCK,
KNOCK.**

Who's there?
Safari!
Safari who?
Safari so good!



ANOTHER LAME JOKE

GIRL MUMMY: What kind of music are you listening to?

BOY MUMMY: Wrap music, of course!

Q

What goes
hum-choo,
hum choo?



A

**TONGUE
TWISTER!**



Say this fast three times:

Six slippery snails slid slowly seaward.

You must be joking...



When is a **car**
like a **frog?**

When it's being toad!

Q

A

Answers



"Spashdown!" (page 41)



Welcome to the
NORTH POLE 

**NOTHING
TO SEE HERE**

WHATEVER YOU'VE HEARD IS NOT TRUE.
SANTA DOESN'T LIVE HERE AND THIS IS NOT SANTA'S SON!



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